

and the sound of gunshots ringing in their ears. The people of the United States deserve representation that works in the face of senseless violence to deliver real solutions that work for millions of Americans. We need solutions that include stronger background checks, while also providing the resources for states to contribute complete and timely records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). We need solutions that reduce the proliferation of assault weapons on our streets, including high-capacity magazines, flash suppressors, and other accessories that enhance the lethality of firearms. More importantly, we need everyone to come to the table in a meaningful way that is not driven by fear or emotion so that we can deliver on the promises that we made when we took the oath of office.

Mr. Speaker, I am calling for action. I am calling for action that is already long overdue, and I call for others to find the compassion in their hearts to also get this done. I call for the courage to make the difficult choices that we finally need to make. Our failure to act now is a failure of our leaders to do what is right, notwithstanding political affiliation or preference. I am calling for action and I am calling for action now. Enough is enough.

THE TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material germane to the topic of this Special Order.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I am here with Mrs. WALTERS from California, who is the co-chair of the Tax Truth Squad. This has been an exciting first 14 months for me serving Michigan's 10th Congressional District. I had the privilege of representing the freshman class in House leadership.

Tax cuts and tax reform are important to me, as I grew up the oldest of seven kids in a family in which dad built trucks in a line and my mom worked full time more often than not to support our family. I saw firsthand the difficulties experienced to make ends meet and support that family. That is why I am committed to ensuring policies that create jobs, economic growth, and wages in the pockets of people who go to work every day and get a paycheck.

Until last December, it seemed to be only a dream that we could achieve meaningful tax cuts and reform. It had been more than 30 years since that had been updated. Since that time, layers of rules and new additions to the Tax Code had grown that into a beast of 74,000 pages. You would have to be a wizard to know what was in it.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act addressed these problems and put more money in the pockets of hardworking Americans so they can make decisions about how to use their own money.

Up until now we have talked about the possibilities and the dream of tax cuts and reform. Now we can talk about the realities of what tax reform is bringing to America.

Representative WALTERS and I have organized a series of floor speeches that begin tonight a little later than originally planned. Each legislative week we have designated one or more States' delegations that will join us and talk about tax reform, tax cuts, and the impact it is having on their constituents and their districts.

Texas is kicking off that initiative tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS), who is the co-chair of the Tax Truth Squad.

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding and for his efforts to share the stories of Americans who are seeing the positive impacts of tax reform.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to set the record straight on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. From day one, misinformation about the benefits of this historic tax reform plan have circulated. The truth is that Americans across the country are receiving bonuses, pay increases, and other benefits that are helping them support their families and save for their futures.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Michigan and I started the Truth Tellers Initiative on Tax Reform to highlight the many ways this bill helps the American people.

Since December, we have witnessed the positive impacts of tax reform. Small businesses are expanding, jobs are being created, retirement and benefit packages are increasing in value, and the American people are keeping more of their hard-earned paychecks.

Over the coming months, Representatives from each State will have the opportunity to share how tax reform has helped their constituents.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, as we go through the evening, I will try to highlight some important components of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

I think one of the most important components is the larger standard deduction. We have doubled the standard deduction from \$12,000 to \$24,000 for married couples. We created a simpler filing process. What we created was, in essence, a filing process where 90 percent of Americans can file their taxes on a form about this size, significantly better than the current Tax Code.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), who is a good friend, a colleague, and the gentleman who led us through the whole battle to achieve this epic change. Congressman KEVIN BRADY is the author of the legislation and a true champion for Amer-

ican taxpayers. He is the Representative of the Eighth District of Texas and the chairperson of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman MITCHELL and Congresswoman MIMI WALTERS for arranging this Special Order to highlight the benefits of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. I am excited to be joined by our Texas colleagues.

Texas is a big winner, like many States, because of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. They estimate it will create 81,000 new, good-paying jobs in our State alone. But that is not just our State. You see huge job gains in California, New York, throughout the Southern States, throughout our Midwest area, and throughout our manufacturing regions.

This historic tax reform is making a real difference for our families and our workers. We all know about tax relief for our small businesses, the first ever 20 percent small business deduction in history. The bill will be a write-off on day one in new investment in plants, equipment, software, and technology.

People know that we made our companies more competitive so they can compete and win all around the world, especially here at home.

I get excited about what we did for families, lowering the tax rates at every level. So whether you made \$20,000 or \$520,000, you keep more of what you earn. We doubled the standard deduction so few people have to itemize. We doubled the child credit and quadrupled how many Americans can actually use it. For the first time, all middle class Americans are going to get help raising children. We are doing away with the AMT except for households up to \$1 million. What that means next year is, instead of 5 million Americans getting caught up with that double tax, it is about 200,000, a fraction of what it is today.

What I really love are the stories. I was in Home Depot the other day, on Sunday. Apparently, we are redoing our bathroom. So my wife was looking at samples, and a woman came up and introduced herself. Her name is Pam. She is a small-business person. She redoes furniture, repaints, and all that, but she works at Home Depot to make ends meet. She introduced herself and said:

Thank you. I get \$184 more every paycheck. Maybe that couple thousand dollars doesn't mean much in Washington, but for my family, it really means a lot. Thank you for that.

Donald from Willis, Texas, saw the benefits of this law in his pay stub. He said:

My Federal tax deducted from my paycheck went from 12 to 9 percent. Yes, I am very happy.

Mr. Speaker, because of tax reform, Texans are excited for a strong and growing economy.

Larry from Spring, Texas, said:

As a 78-year-old retiree working part time, even a small difference in take-home pay is

welcome. I am delighted to see the spur to overall economic activity that should benefit all, locally and nationally.

□ 2045

Every day, I hear stories like this: people receiving raises and bigger benefits at work. And we did, simply, the Code. As Congressman MITCHELL pointed out, under the new Tax Code, next year, nearly 90 percent of Americans will be able to file their taxes using a simple postcard-style system. That is fairness. That is growth. That is increasing jobs and paychecks.

I want to thank my colleagues from Texas joining us here tonight for their critical role in passing this historic Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Without this support, it wouldn't have happened.

I also thank Congressman MITCHELL and Congresswoman WALTERS for arranging this Special Order and continuing, as they did during the debates, informing people of the tax reform plan. I thank them for playing such a leadership role.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BRADY for his leadership on this issue. He talked a little bit of the impact it has had on his district in Texas. Here, we have a sign. Since the tax reform bill passed, more than 400 companies have given a pay raise, a bonus, increased 401(k) contributions, or, in the case of utilities, lowered their rates.

At least 4 million Americans are receiving special tax reform bonuses. The direct bonus announcements already, to date, exceed \$3 billion. There are companies like JetBlue, KeyBank, and DTE Energy in my district back home, Alaska Airlines. We could go through the list. Four hundred companies have already announced major changes and major investments. These have a major impact throughout the country and on our constituents.

Next, we are going to hear from another colleague and a good friend. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the Representative from the 25th District of Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS), who has consistently been a voice of businessowners throughout his district and America through his work on the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to talk about how the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is benefiting Texas, especially folks in the 25th Congressional District that I represent.

There are approximately 28 million people lucky enough to call themselves Texans. Of that, I have the great honor of representing hundreds of thousands of hardworking Americans who wake up and go to work every day, just like you and me.

For 5 years, I have traveled up and down the 25th District of Texas, most recently, just last week, where I visited many local businesses along the way. I have witnessed firsthand the hardships that families and small businesses face day in and day out due to an intrusive Federal Government and overreaching administration.

I pledged to these people that I would bring my commonsense business perspective to Washington in order to jump-start this economy, and I am proud to say that I upheld that promise.

When I visited these folks last week, there was something different about them. For the first time in a long time, I had businessowners and their employees telling me about the positive impacts coming from our Nation's Tax Code. They were telling me they noticed more money in their most recent paychecks. One man even told me he plans to use his extra money to put into his 401(k) so that he can save even more for his retirement.

This means parents can now plan for their future and start putting away money for their kids' college funds. It means companies are adding to their workforce and that those individuals can keep more money in their pockets.

Ultimately, these hardworking Texans are seeing more jobs, fairer taxes, and bigger paychecks. I am proud to be their voice in Washington, and I will continue fighting on their behalf.

In God we trust.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, some of our colleagues on the floor, as we worked toward passing this epic reform, talked about the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act as being Armageddon, as being the end of the world. Let's talk a little about that.

On CNBC on February 20, they had a survey: Q1 Small Business Confidence Index saw an increase of 5 points. Forty-six percent of those surveyed say tax policy changes will have a positive effect on their business, up from 38 percent in the fourth quarter. The number of those same tax policy changes that have a negative impact fell sharply to 23 percent. Only one in three respondents expect to receive a tax cut. The independent Tax Policy Center estimates that four out of five Americans will actually see a tax cut at the end of the year.

Not quite the Armageddon some of our colleagues predicted.

We are now going to hear from another colleague. Representing Texas' 22nd District and a vocal advocate for a simpler and fairer Tax Code, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON).

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, my friend from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL), and his cohort, Mrs. WALTERS of California, for this first Special Order of the Tax Reform Truth Squad.

We are thrilled that Texans have the first chance to speak on such an important issue. Texans love to brag about Texas, and that is what we will do tonight. That is what I will do.

I want to brag about two stories from home and two faces from home. The first face is Justin Mannino. He runs the Houston Shoe Hospital in my hometown of Sugar Land, Texas. It is right there at the corner of Williams Trace and State Highway 6. For 10

years, I have taken my boots to be shined at that store.

I have talked to Justin about what the Tax Code and the cuts will do for his business. He said:

It is simple. More money in my pocket means I will pay off all my credit cards and all our debt.

But most importantly, Justin met his bride in Mexico. They were married there. With all this new money he has because of our tax cuts, he plans to take his two kids to the same church where they were married to baptize them in the Lord, Jesus Christ. That is priceless. That has happened because of these tax cuts.

A second story and face that comes to mind is a dear friend, Andres Novoa. He is the owner of a Fort Bend County icon, La Cocina Mexican Restaurant, right there off of Highway 357.

He told me that the biggest benefit to his business is that he can pay his employees more—more money in their pockets. He can expand his business. He can get new equipment. He said the last 4 years of high taxes and the exploding regulations have caused a small retraction in his business. He is now in full expansion mode. He is giving his employees more pay and has plans right now to buy more equipment.

And there is more.

Andres is the heart and soul of an annual fundraiser for seniors' Meals on Wheels in Fort Bend County. Every Cinco de Mayo, when Mexico celebrates their independence from France, he has a fundraiser at La Cocina. Last year, he raised over \$60,000. With more money in his pocket, he thinks he can have a bigger party and maybe raise \$100,000, or maybe purchase a new van to deliver food.

This is a picture of Andres. He is smiling because he was talking with us about those amazing tax cuts. He is just one more picture.

I invite America to check out Justin's and Andres' story at my website, my Facebook page, or on Twitter. Hear their voices. See them speak. Learn what they have learned.

I will close with a request from Justin and Andres. They want me to say thank you to President Donald Trump and thank you to every Member of Congress who voted for this bill.

This bill is not about crumbs. This bill is about real money in real people's pockets. I invite everyone to come down to Houston, Texas, in Sugar Land, and get your boots shined at Houston Shoe Hospital. If you have some time, add another belt buckle, because you will get filled up at Andres' restaurant, La Cocina.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for joining us.

We were talking about some of the improvements in people's lives that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has created. Over the weekend, I received a message from one of my constituents, Mark. I know him. He and his wife work hard. They don't make a lot of money.

But I got a nice note saying: Thank you so much. They met with their accountant about this year's taxes and projected next year. He said they will have another \$2,700 a year in their pocket that they will have to make decisions about fixing their house or maybe taking a little vacation up north.

These are the things the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has done.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), a good friend of mine who has been an instrumental Member in bringing the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to the House floor. His work on behalf of the 32nd District of Texas and all Americans has certainly been recognized. He is also chairman of the Rules Committee.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, tonight I join to talk and to thank the leadership of the Republican Party, who made a firm decision during the last elections that our party needed to stand for not only making America great again, but every single American who needed an opportunity to join in that endeavor.

Tonight, I stand in this beautiful time that we discuss the tax bill that Republicans passed last year and talk about the effects of it and how much it has helped in America.

I think a story needs to be told about what the goal of the tax bill was. Why did Republicans work so hard to move these ideas forward?

The bottom line to it is Americans watched as the Democratic Party and President Obama not only had their control of the country, but economically, as the policies of the Democratic Party became more apparent to people, Americans and the world watched as America dwindled in economic activity and economic growth.

This took place because of the policies that the President, President Obama at the time, brought forth and Congress passed: trillion-dollar spending plans, trillion-dollar increases in the budget, and talk of raising taxes another trillion dollars.

What happened is, for some 8 years, there was GDP growth of about 1.2 percent. Mr. Speaker, that means, very plainly, that it would take about 70 years to double the size of our economy, which means that communities and States and companies and individuals lag behind as they would watch other cities and other countries and other people around the globe not only have economic activity, but opportunities that came to their doorsteps. IPOs, or initial public offerings, and all the acronyms that go with economic growth and development went overseas; they went other places.

So Republicans began this discussion with the American people going into 2010 that said: We need to be careful about government spending, but, on the same side, what we need to do is to grow our economy. That is exactly the discussion that took place during the last Presidential election.

So as soon as the election was over, Republicans began the process of not only making America great again, but doing it by empowering every single State and every single American to be a part of this growth. Essentially, there was a look at some \$12 trillion worth of economic tax components.

KEVIN BRADY, who is the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, from Houston, Texas—actually, Spring, Texas—was in charge, as the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, of looking at how we were going to move our economy forward. I call that pop.

How we were going to take economic activity and, instead of perhaps helping an individual or a company or necessarily one particular part of the economy, we wanted where it would go and add pop or generationally develop more economic activity than just for a singular entity.

□ 2100

And KEVIN BRADY, as the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, looked at some \$5.6 trillion out of this \$12 trillion and said: We need to take that and make that the engine of the economy.

So a decision was made to move that directly to the free enterprise system. Mr. Speaker, it is the free enterprise system that stands as the greatest activity for freedom in the world, an activity that not only brings opportunity and investment and entrepreneurship, but more than that, wealth. It has brought wealth to the United States of America, a free enterprise system that is there to produce for anyone that chooses to be participatory in that environment—an opportunity to begin by investing your own money, by hard work where you show up at work, and having customers or consumers that go and generate economic activity, and that is what America has been, and that is what we were slowing down.

The engine of that economy was slowed down because our predecessors, not only in the Presidency but also our friends who are Democrats, believed that they would engage the free enterprise system in such a way that did not allow it to grow, did not allow it to expand, and did not allow itself to build.

So what KEVIN BRADY did, as chairman of the Ways and Means, was propose a tax bill that would take \$5.6 trillion worth of tax components and move it directly to the free enterprise system. By moving it to the free enterprise system, we reduced taxes. We reduced taxes from the 37 percent range for corporate down to 21 percent.

What does that do? Well, that takes America, an American business as seen by the world, from 24th in the world to number one. So instead of us being what might be on a list of 24th place of easy-to-do business, that was generating not only goods and services, but was the ease of doing business with, that people wanted to be a part of, that has taken us to first in the world.

That means that America will begin building back not only jobs and job cre-

ation, but it will build back with the intellectual capacity to build the newest, finest ideas and products that the world needs for tomorrow because America will be a place that is not only easy to do business but is less priced, and because we can be less priced, we can become the products of choice all around the world.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say: This is working. This is working to take America not only where they are in first place, but it means Americans and American companies can be in the same position.

As a Member of Congress from Dallas, Texas, I have an opportunity to see firsthand not only how this impacts people and companies but how it impacts the workers. And it wasn't but 2 weeks ago when I was at what was called the National Write Your Congressman, which is headquartered in Dallas, Texas. Randy Ford is their President; and Randy gave me good news. He said that of the small businesses that they had talked to, that they believed that 74 percent of small-business owners expected revenues to be higher in 2018, and even higher the next year, which meant that they felt positive about not only economic growth but, more importantly, their companies.

I also visited Texas Moving Company, which is a family owned business of some 40 years old that is in Richardson, Texas, and they told me, point-blank, that as a result of us making sure that we would reduce the cost of doing business by reducing taxes, that they had increased their driver's pay by over \$2,400.

That means that it does come directly to the employees that are able to have not only more take-home pay, but they are able to know that they can fall into more easily knowing that they may take a part-time job to a full-time job, a full-time job to a career, and a career as an opportunity to make sure that they better the lives of not only their family but their children also in their community.

And this is why Texas Moving Company made a decision then, as they saw this money that they would have; they made a determination that they would increase their employees by \$2,400, but they also increased their health insurance reimbursement to where they now pay \$3,484 a year to help their employees to pay more of their healthcare costs because they can do that on a pretax basis.

Mr. Speaker, it is all these things that the Republican majority has done. When others said it would simply be crumbs or unimportant, we said we are going to focus on making America great again; and when you do that, you will find that you not only make America great, but you make Americans and their families greater also.

Mr. Speaker, this is why we, as Texans, stand up not only as proud Members of the Congress, but also as proud Americans who say: We want to make

sure that everybody, no matter where they live in the United States, that they would be a part of making their city, their State, their company, and their family even stronger.

I appreciate Mr. MITCHELL allowing me to be here tonight. It is my hope that the discussion that we have with the American people and the Chair, Mr. Speaker, that you will recognize that if we are going to do this, it will mean that we are going to have to understand it is not up to government to make this work; it is up to the American people. We are giving them the tools in this tax bill, and I think they will do the right thing for everybody.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding to me this evening.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mr. SESSIONS joining me tonight. As I said, along the way, we are going to highlight some aspects of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Real quickly, I want to outline that up to \$24,000 of a married couple's income is taxed zero. There is no tax on that. We continue to allow families to write off State and local taxes, up to \$10,000. We help families with children in taking care of their loved ones by doubling the child tax credit and preserving the child and dependent tax credit, while also preserving the adoption tax credit, all critical things to families and helping support families through the Tax Code.

Mr. Speaker, I next yield to the Congressman from Texas (Mr. FLORES), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee with decades of experience in job creation and providing opportunity for economic growth.

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. Today, I rise with my fellow Texas colleagues to share some examples of how the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is helping hardworking Texans and their families.

Our bold progrowth tax reform bill was signed into law just 67 days ago. Since then, more than 4 million Americans have seen some combination of a wage boost, a bonus, or enhanced employee benefits. Businesses with footprints in the 17th Congressional District, the district that I am honored to represent, such as Apple, Best Buy, Cognizant, CVS, FedEx, Home Depot, Lowe's, Starbucks, U-Haul, UPS, Walmart, Waste Management, and Visa have passed on some of the savings that they are getting from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act on to their employees.

Additionally, we know that there are plenty of other small and large businesses in Texas that are doing the same. Another great example of the benefits to central Texas families is Oncor Electric, which serves about 3.4 million homes and businesses in Texas, including seven counties in the 17th Congressional District. They have agreed to return all of the tax cut benefits to their customers in the form of lower energy bills.

Now that Federal tax withholding tables have been updated to reflect the

lower tax rates, many Texans are taking home bigger paychecks. In the 17th Congressional District, a typical working class family of four will see a tax cut of \$1,885. This very welcome influx of cash helped central Texans have a chance to save and a chance to get ahead.

I am also proud to represent a district that includes a significant footprint of Texas' best research institutions, including Texas A&M University, Baylor University, and the University of Texas at Austin.

Our new progrowth tax system provides support for graduate students by continuing to exempt the value of reduced and free tuition from taxes. This is something that I fought hard to preserve so that we can continue to have the best and brightest students as they educate and pursue important research initiatives in the 21st century and in the State of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is doing exactly what we set out to do, which is to help create more jobs, bigger paychecks, and fairer taxes for hardworking American families. I thank the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS); the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL); and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, for leading this great discussion tonight on the positive changes that have been brought about through the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. I look forward to learning more about, and sharing, these important success stories with the citizens from my district.

As I close, I ask that all Americans continue to pray for our country during these difficult times, for the families of the victims in Florida, the recent Florida shootings, for our military men and women who protect us from external threats, and for our first responders who protect us at home.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I continue with the discussion of the impact to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act by introducing a colleague on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the defender of a strong rural economy, representing the 36th District of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to Congressman BRIAN BABIN.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative PAUL MITCHELL for this opportunity to talk about our historic tax cut legislation and the great benefits that are flowing to small businesses and the tens of millions of Americans who work for them.

This is especially true in the great State of Texas and the nine counties that I represent from Houston to the Louisiana State line, which has more petrochemical refining facilities than any district in the entire United States, and their employees benefitting from lower taxes. But the gains and the headlines that we have seen say so much more than that. The gains extend far beyond just employees benefitting

from lower taxes. I am also hearing from hundreds of individuals and families about how their tax bills are being cut and what they plan to do with their larger paychecks.

ExxonMobil has announced a \$50 billion investment in its U.S. operations and employees over the next 5 years. Walmart has already boosted hourly wages and provided employees with a bonus. Boeing, Incorporated, has announced \$300 million in employee-related investments and charitable giving.

Let's break this down even further to the stories that aren't making the headlines of major papers but which are improving lives and growing businesses all across southeast Texas.

Juan and Leigh both owned small businesses in Houston and were able to hire additional employees with the money that they are saving from their tax cuts. That is putting Americans to work immediately.

Amy in Polk County shared with me that she was able to purchase new equipment to run her business much more efficiently. Helen in Tyler County took her tax savings and plowed it back into her business to help it grow. Julie in Orange shared that she will save enough from the tax cuts to purchase a larger inventory for her business.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and I am hearing story after story just like this about small businesses growing and hiring our friends and our neighbors. The individual tax rate cuts are making a huge difference for east Texans as over 90 percent of Americans are getting a tax cut.

Robert from Highlands wrote to tell me that he is using his tax savings to help his daughter get a college degree. Alan in Houston has decided to put his tax cut into savings for his retirement. Ms. Drake is now able to buy a new stove, while Justin from Harris County is paying down credit card debt.

Scott is using his savings to help him buy a brand new home. Mr. Woods told me that with his tax savings, he is spending it on his wife. He may be the smartest of us all.

The tax cuts are even helping in Hurricane Harvey recovery. Judy from Orange County shared with me how the tax cuts have enabled her to replace household items destroyed by Hurricane Harvey, and Jason from Baytown is able to now repair his home.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is making a real difference in the lives of our friends and our neighbors in southeast Texas and all across this Nation.

□ 2115

These decisions add up to tens of billions of dollars of investments in our economy, in small businesses, in education, and in the improvement of our lives.

Tens of millions of Americans are seeing lower payroll deductions resulting in bigger paychecks, more retirement savings, bigger family budgets,

and relief at every level. This tax cut bill is benefiting families, job creators, and our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Michigan, Mr. PAUL MITCHELL, for giving us this opportunity to speak about this wonderful historic tax package.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BABIN for joining us this evening.

Congressman BABIN talked about the impact on small businesses. Many businesses in his district are what are called pass-throughs—they are family businesses. For the first time ever, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act provides the ability for small businesses to deduct 20 percent of their income and tax it at a much lower rate—at 25 percent—to allow those businesses to grow.

It also allows those businesses to immediately write off the full cost of new equipment, rather than expense it or amortize it over 7 years, because money out of their pocket now means it is real money out that they can't wait for 7 years to get back to the Tax Code—significant differences allowing businesses in my district and throughout the country to invest in growth.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER), my colleague representing the 14th District of Texas, with extensive real-world experience in the private sector through his own small business.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MITCHELL for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, the Texas delegation comes before the American people to say that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is working. It is making a positive impact on our paychecks and our lives. This bill is making a big difference—not just crumbs—it is making a big difference.

Mr. Speaker, Ronald Reagan once said: “. . . whenever we lower the tax rates, our Nation is better off.” President Reagan was on to something.

Mr. Speaker, in just over 2 months—listen to these astounding statistics—in just over 2 months, 350 companies have announced more than \$3 billion worth of bonuses. That benefits over 4 million Americans. The success of this bill spans from coast to coast and across all industries, both large and small, and across Democrat and Republican, I might add, Mr. Speaker.

During the week, I hear the success of this bill as companies make their various announcements. Then, on the weekends, when I am back home and out in the district, I have people coming up to me, telling me about the great things this bill is doing for them, their families, and their businesses.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is making a big difference. Everyone has a story to share. Paychecks are bigger. There are more opportunities. Student loans don't seem as daunting. A new car seems within reach. Sports equipment for their children is reasonable. That family vacation they have been saving for now is on the verge of reality.

Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of small businesses in the 14th District of Texas. I used to be one of them, as Mr. MITCHELL alluded to. Those small businesses support the community in more ways than one.

One, in particular, in my district has announced benefits from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and that is Hawkins Lease Service in Alvin, Texas. Jay and Adrienne Hawkins are great friends, great business people, and great patriots. Jay let me know the other day that they recently gave each of their employees a \$1,000 bonus. Let me repeat that: it is \$1,000. If I remember correctly, Jay said they have 120 employees. Now—do the math—that is \$120,000 put back into this economy, Mr. Speaker. That is far from crumbs. If you ask me, that will make a huge difference.

ExxonMobil announced they were expanding their Permian Basin project. This expansion alone will create thousands of jobs, strengthen the economy, and bolster energy security, and national security, I might add. The Permian Basin is a bit of a drive away from us on the coast, but the increased production will provide low-cost supply and feedstocks to their operations throughout the State, including ExxonMobil's plant in our very own district, in Beaumont, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that there was something my dad taught me: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. I will tell you what, he also taught me: if it is broke, you better fix it, and fix it we did.

My hat is off to KEVIN BRADY—what a great job he did—also, to Mr. MITCHELL and Mrs. WALTERS for heading up this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BRADY for shepherding this bill through. We couldn't have done this without him. I also thank Congressman MITCHELL and Congresswoman WALTERS for hosting this tax reform Special Order.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON), from the 19th District of Texas, who is a member of the Budget Committee.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL), for hosting us and giving us the opportunity from the great State of Texas to talk about all of the positive effects of this recent tax reform and tax relief for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have helped pass this historic tax relief for the American people and deliver on a promise that we would grow this economy, we would create jobs, and we would improve the overall quality of life for all Americans. I represent hard-working, God-fearing, freedom-loving people in rural west Texas. They produce the food, fuel, and fiber for this great country. They feed and clothe the American people, and they fuel this great American economy.

The burden of high taxes and regulations hurt all of our job creators, but they have a disproportionate negative impact on the little guys in rural America. Our small businesses, our community banks, our family farmers and ranchers are independent energy producers. I can say with great confidence—having been back to the district, having talked to numerous people from all over those 29 counties I represent in the broad swath of land in west Texas—this tax cut and reform package is proenergy, it is proagriculture, and it is prorural America.

Back in my district, we hosted some roundtables with small businesses and chambers of commerce. We had various events that I participated in. We even conducted surveys. According to our survey, over 80 percent of the people I represent say that this tax reform package has helped everybody.

At one of our roundtable events, we had a veteran-owned agribusinessman who said that he had had 600 new customers this January over last year. He said that the effects of that was that he converted some of his part-time workers to full-time workers and gave folks a raise.

At the Happy State Bank, the employees are happy, and there are happy days for that organization because they are saving \$5 million and plowing it back into their human capital. Six hundred out of 700 of Happy State Bank employees will receive an increase in their pay and benefits. Some will receive over a 50 percent pay increase.

Now, this is not crumbs to the folks whom I represent in west Texas. This is real cash in the pockets of real Americans who work hard every day to make ends meet.

There has been a change in west Texas, and, for once, it is not the weather. There is a renewed optimism. You can hear it in their voices; you can see it in their faces.

Mr. Speaker, we are witnessing a great American comeback, and the formula hasn't changed from the beginning of this great experiment. Limit the government and you will unleash the limitless potential of the American people.

God bless America, and go west Texas.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, Mr. ARRINGTON referenced some of the changes in Texas in some of the important improvements in the business climate as a result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Southwest Airlines and American Airlines both chose to give bonuses to their employees of \$1,000 each shortly after passage of this bill and signed by President Trump.

A surprise we hadn't anticipated was lowering electricity bills. Both in north Texas and in my district back in Michigan, there were massive cuts in utility rates as a result of lowering taxes—not something that we thought about or bargained for at the time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) and thank him for bringing his medical expertise to the tax reform discussion with his service on the Energy and Commerce Committee, from the 26th District of Texas.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

1986 was the last time our Tax Code was refined. I had been practicing medicine for 5 years. Now, some 31 years later and after 15 years in Congress, the reformation of our Tax Code has made a profound difference in our country.

Mr. Speaker, it is not lost on me that the rhetoric prior to the vote on the conference report on the tax bill was pretty negative. The idea was to sow doubt in the minds of people who would be affected by the tax bill, to sow doubt in the minds of people who would otherwise be wanting to vote for tax relief for tax improvement.

And I will have to tell you something: after that vote—and Mr. MITCHELL referenced Southwest Airlines and American Airlines—I cannot remember having ever had the positive feedback for a vote that I have taken here in this Congress like there was for this tax vote.

In my own Walmart, the week after Christmas, people were coming up to me saying, “I work for American Airlines,” or “I work for Southwest Airlines.” I have a lot of families in the 26th District of Texas who work for American Airlines or Southwest Airlines, and they all got \$1,000 bonuses because of the tax relief that we had provided. Again, I cannot ever remember having that much positive reinforcement on a bill that, quite honestly, the rhetoric going into it was pretty negative.

The benefits have been immediate, as indicated by the increases in salaries and bonuses paid to employees. And Southwest Airlines, in addition to the bonuses to their employees, donated \$5 million to charity, as well as made some capital improvements.

FedEx, which, of course, employs people all over the country, but has a big hub in the district that I represent, is going to spend \$133 million increasing hourly wages, as well as \$67 million on programs for salaried employees, and, get this, \$3 billion on their pension plan and capital improvements. That is a pretty big turnaround.

The good folks at Peterbilt trucks, located in the 26th District of Texas, received over \$170 million in tax benefits in the fourth quarter of 2017, as a direct result of this tax bill. Peterbilt also estimates that its 2018 effective global tax rate will be reduced by up to 8 percent and that the lower corporate tax rate and accelerated depreciation will, indeed, stimulate capital investment.

The increased prosperity of these and other companies will subsequently improve the financial situation of their employees. Coupled with a nearly dou-

bled standard deduction, income for most individuals and families will, in fact, increase.

Chairman BRADY mentioned filing taxes on a postcard. Mr. Speaker, when I first came to Congress, I really wanted us to enact a flat tax. I still do. But I will take the improvement that we have gotten, the gift of time, back to, what, 85 to 90 percent of tax filers who no longer are going to have to keep up with that shoebox full of receipts and spend quality time with their accountants every March and April as they prepare their Federal tax return. We are going to allow people to pay for necessities, without having to worry about other discretionary items and services, often provided by small businesses.

Local improvements in economic condition will not only benefit Main Street business owners, but I like to say it is going to benefit Elm Street business owners. That is the small business off of Main Street. It is going to allow people to spend money across State lines. Increased financial mobility will inject capital into the market and continue the growth of our economy.

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Look, we are right on the verge of some pretty significant and profound economic changes that are going to be beneficial, I predict, to all Americans. This is an important time in this country, time for us to get to work and deliver for the American people.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for joining me this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I did want to, at this point, wrap up this evening's version of the Tax Truth Squad.

Since the tax reform bill was passed and signed into law, let me state again that more than 400 companies have given a pay raise; bonuses; increased 401(k) contributions; or, in the case of utilities, lowered rates—lowered rates dramatically.

At least 4 million Americans are receiving special tax reform bonuses. Direct bonus announcements have already topped \$3 billion; \$3 billion into our economy, into people's pockets, decisions they can make about what they want to do with the money rather than turning it over to the government, rather than turning it over to the IRS, rather than having it spent on bureaucracy.

In my home district, we will talk about that more next week, but I want to reference that Fiat Chrysler is moving jobs here from Mexico, moving to Macomb County, investing \$1 billion—yes, you heard that right, investing \$1 billion—in expanding a plant and creating 2,500 new jobs in Michigan just in that one plant.

By the way, they also announced a bonus—a tax bonus separate from their bonus in their contract, which some people said: Oh, it was in their contract.

No, it wasn't. It was a bonus of \$2,000 per employee as a result of the tax bill.

These are major cuts that people overlook. Look at these companies, look at the list of them, and it grows every day.

Let me suggest real quickly: I don't know about you, Mr. Speaker, but I know my district and I know my constituents, and \$1,000 is not crumbs.

I referenced earlier the note I got over the weekend from Mark in my district who says his projected taxes next year save him \$2,700 in his pocket.

Now, I know where you live, I know where I live, that is real money. Maybe for some of my colleagues, it doesn't matter as much, but that is why we passed this bill. That is why we worked so hard on this bill. That is why we support it. And that is the truth about taxes.

That is what we want the American people to understand: we are putting money back in their pockets, money back in the economy, rather than taking money and putting it in government and hoping they do something productive with it.

I thank the Chair for the opportunity this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) until no later than 10 p.m.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for such great words of encouragement. I was hearing it all across east Texas as I was all over the district this past week. People are encouraged when it comes to the economy. People are feeling better about the economy. I am hearing it.

They are encouraged, but after yet another school shooting, another mass shooting, I am hearing more and more people who are asking: Why? Why is this?

Of course, some say, you know, the United States is the only place that mass shootings occur. Of course, that is just false. There are worse mass shootings in other parts of the world.

Some say if we get rid of all guns in the country, then we could end the senseless violence, but when you try to tell that to people who were in Rwanda during the period when 800,000 people or so were slaughtered with machetes for the most part, it goes beyond the question of the weapon.

We have seen airplanes used as bombs for the worst mass execution in our country's history. Of course, Pearl Harbor, bombs were used, bombs themselves. We know in Oklahoma City, apparently it was anhydrous ammonia, fertilizer. We have seen the Boston bombing utilizing pressure cookers.

So if the answer is to get rid of the weapons, we got to get rid of airplanes. We got to get rid of rental trucks. We